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Identical letters dated 20 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit the following:

"As you are aware, the events of 22 February afford the people of Angola a unique opportunity for peace. The Government of Angola is determined to seize this opportunity and reaffirms its commitments under the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex) and the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. The Government of Angola continues to view the United Nations and the Troika of observer States to the Lusaka Protocol as partners in the resolution of the conflict in Angola. Likewise, the Government of Angola recognizes the role of the civil society, the church and political parties in the process of national reconciliation within the confines of the Lusaka Protocol.

"In order to seize the opportunity for peace, the Government of Angola instructed the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) to establish contact with the military leadership of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) to negotiate a general ceasefire indispensable for the participation of UNITA in the political process that will follow.

"Acting on instructions to establish contact with the military leadership of UNITA FAA are currently engaged in direct dialogue with the military leadership of UNITA for the establishment of a general ceasefire, which will enable the necessary environment for the resumption of political negotiations on the implementation of the remaining items of the Lusaka Protocol.

"The initial meeting took place on 15 March in the locality of Cassamba, Moxico province, Angola. During the meeting, the participants reaffirmed their unequivocal commitment to the Lusaka Protocol and agreed upon a framework and agenda for subsequent meetings. Following the meeting, the delegations issued a communique setting the date for the following meeting for Monday, 18 March, and agreed that subsequent meetings would take place in Luena, province of Moxico. Owing to logistic issues, the meeting was postponed until today, Wednesday, 20 March and is currently under way.

"In compliance with the Lusaka Protocol, the agenda centres on achieving the following objectives:

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1. Demilitarization of UNITA;

2. Integration of part of the active forces of UNITA into FAA;

3. Demobilization and integration of the remaining soldiers into civil society.

"To implement these objectives, the parties are directly engaged in the establishment of a mechanism, framework and timetable. Discussions are taking place in a spirit of constructive cooperation. During this process, the Government of Angola will keep the United Nations Secretary-General and the Security Council fully apprised of all developments by regularly informing the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Angola, and representatives of the Troika and, when necessary, by direct briefing to the Council. At the conclusion, the parties will sign a binding agreement and initiate its implementation.

"General Sachipengo Nunda, Deputy Chief of Staff of FAA, heads the FAA delegation. On the part of UNITA, General Kamorteiro, Chief of Staff, heads its delegation. Among other senior officers present at the discussions are General Samy, Deputy Chief of Staff, and General Malungo Bravo Pedro Kalias, Chief of Staff at the President's Office. In addition, those present have established and maintained contact with the remaining leadership. As a result of this, the delegation received an agreement in principle from the Secretary-General of UNITA, General Paulo Lukamba Gato.

"The signature of this document will mark the beginning of the second phase, which will deal with the implementation of the remaining political items of the Lusaka Protocol.

"The Government of Angola welcomes and calls upon the international community to continue to assist its efforts in the implementation of its emergency humanitarian assistance programme.

"The Government of Angola believes that sanctions remain an important instrument in the resolution of the conflict in Angola. In addition representing the will of the international community, sanctions are an effective deterrent against rearmament on the part of UNITA. Given the military nature of the negotiations currently taking place in Angola, it regards as premature any attempt to lift any part of the sanctions currently in force as they relate to curbing the ability of UNITA to rearm itself.

"Upon the establishment of a general ceasefire and the establishment of a mechanism for compliance verification, the Government of Angola will, as in the past, work with the Monitoring Mechanism on Sanctions against UNITA to propose the appropriate revisions.

"The Government of Angola reiterates its commitment to peace in Angola. The nature of the opportunity for peace commands swift and dynamic responses, the conceptualization of which cannot risk losing the opportunity."

I should be most grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ismael A. Gaspar **Martins**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative